

Omaha World-Herald 9/26/68

Multi-Degreed Beckham Gets 'Phony' Tag, 30 Days

"You're a phony," Municipal Judge Walter Cropper said Wednesday as he sentenced T. Edward Beckham to 30 days in jail.

Mr. Beckham, 27, evangelist and country-western singer, pleaded no contest to a charge that he operated an unlicensed private correspondence school called the American Academy of Professional Arts.

Earlier Wednesday, Mr. Beckham forfeited a one-thousand-dollar bond when he failed to appear to answer the charge. Judge Cropper issued a bench warrant for Mr. Beckham's arrest.

About 1:30 p. m., Mr. Beckham came to the Central Police Station with attorney James Abboud and entered the no contest plea.

Deputy County Attorney J. William Gallup, told Judge Cropper that Beckham was charged after the California Attorney General complained to Nebraska authorities that Mr. Beckham sold a degree to a California man who was illiterate.

The man, in turn, began selling degrees, Mr. Gallup said. Some of the degrees claimed that the recipient was a "doctor of Metaphysics" able to perform "drugless therapy," Mr. Gallup

said.

Mr. Beckham testified that the degrees were of a type which required no prior education. He said they were similar to honorary degrees.

After Mr. Beckham talked for a few minutes, Mr. Abboud told him to "shut up."

Judge Cropper then called Mr. Beckham a phony.

Wayne Dropping Beckham Charge

One of the problems of evangelist-singer T. Edward Beckham, 27, was cleared up Friday.

Wayne County Attorney Donald R. Reed dismissed a check charge against Beckham. He notified Douglas County Attorney Donald L. Knowles that the insufficient fund check Beckham had cashed in that city has been covered.

Beckham still is charged with grand larceny in New Orleans, La.

Deputy County Attorney J. William Gallup said that the extradition proceedings will begin as soon as Beckham completes 30-day jail sentence.

Beckham received the term in Municipal Court after pleading no contest to a charge of operating an unlicensed correspondence school on metaphysics.

Beckham Freed

On \$1,000 Bond

Evangelist-entertainer T. Edward Beckham was free on a one-thousand-dollar bond Tuesday after his arrest by police Monday.

Mr. Beckham, 27, of 5314 North Forty-eighth Street is charged with operating a mail-order diploma school without a license.

Police said he operated the American Academy of Professional Arts, Inc., which will mail potential students a doctorate of philosophy or other degree for fees ranging from 150 dollars to three hundred dollars.

Omaha Court Orders Probe Figure Return

District Attorney Jim Garrison has achieved his first success in getting an out-of-state court to return a witness in his probe of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

A district court in Omaha yesterday ordered Thomas Edward Beckham, an evangelist-entertainer sought as a material witness, to return to testify before the Orleans Parish grand jury.

Beckham, 27, had been arrested for failing to appear for a hearing.

COURTS IN Ohio, California and elsewhere have previously refused to return persons subpoenaed by Garrison.

In another development, a New Orleans bar owner prominently linked with the probe was arrested here and booked with obscenity involving a 16-year-old boy.

Eugene Davis, 43, was arrested at his residence at 522 Dauphine after police said he lured a juvenile to his home and made advances to him.

The boy fled and called police. Davis was arrested about 3:10 p. m.

DAVIS WAS linked to the assassination probe by attorney Dean Andrews, who said Davis was the mysterious "Clay Bertrand" who called him on behalf of Lee Harvey Oswald the day after the assassination. Garrison contends that Clay L. Shaw, under indictment for conspiracy in the assassination, used Bertrand as an alias.

Andrews was subsequently convicted of perjury in connection with his statements about the assassination.

NEW WITNESS ELUDES THE DA

Lives in Iowa Which Not in Compact

Thomas Edward Beckham, 27, one of three new witnesses subpoenaed by Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison in his Kennedy Death plot investigation has eluded legal attempts to bring him here for testimony.

Beckham, a former New Orleans disc jockey and entertainer, told Omaha, Neb., newsmen Saturday he is living in Iowa. Another wanted witness, Sandra Moffett McMaines, is also a resident of Iowa, one of four states which do not honor the interstate witness compact.

This is the statute under which Garrison sought Beckham's return, in order for him to testify before the Orleans Parish grand jury.

Garrison's office Friday issued subpoenas for Beckham, Loran Eugene Hall of Kernville, Calif., and Lawrence J. Howard Jr., of Los Angeles.

MATERIAL WITNESSES

All three men, according to the DA, are important material witnesses in his continuing investigation into the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas.

Garrison said in his request for Beckham's subpoena that Beckham was in Dallas the day Kennedy was shot. Garrison also said Beckham was a close associate of David W. Ferrie.

Ferrie was named as one of the presidential assassination conspirators in the indictment of retired New Orleans businessman Clay L. Shaw.

Ferrie once claimed to be an ordained priest in a small religious order, the Old Orthodox Catholic Church of North America. Ferrie died last February of what the coroner described as natural causes.

GARRISON STATEMENT

In a statement supporting his subpoena, Garrison said Beckham was a priest in the same order Ferrie claimed to belong to and often wore a black suit with the collar reversed when he lived in New Orleans.

Beckham's address, as listed by Garrison is Omaha, but Beckham told newsmen he was living in a motel in Council Bluffs, Iowa, just across the Missouri River from the Nebraska city. Beckham said he was working under the name of Mark Evans as a musical entertainer in the area.